SYRIAC GOSPELS.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINAITIC PALIMP-SEST.

A TRANSLATION OF THE FOUR GOSPELS FROM THE SYRIAC OF THE SINAITIC PALIMPSEST. By Agnes Smith Lewis, M. R. A. S. 239 pp., 74x5. Macmillan & Co., London And New-York.

The Syriac manuscript translated in this volame was discovered by Mrs. Lewis in the convent of St. Katherine on Mount Sinai in 1892. It will be remembered that in the same place Tischendorf in 1844 discovered the famous Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible. The document found by Mrs. Lewis was a thick volume, written on vellum, the leaves of which had so closely adhered to each other that they could be separated only by the application of steam. Underneath a later writing containing the lives of certain female saints was a Syriac version of the four Gospels, written in the older and more clumsy Syrtac character. On a second visit to the convent in 1893 Mrs. Lewis, assisted by Professor Bensly and Professor J. Rendel Harris, transcribed the entire text, sometimes bringing Ewald, Cureton himself, and Dr. Isaac Hall reit out by the aid of chemicals, and photographed the pages

Early versions of documents have a peculiar value in determining questions as to the authenticity, genuineness, date and text of the originals. A version of the second or third century implies a much earlier date for its original, for | 3. Assuming that Tatian's Diatessaron was comin that early age it required many years for a document to acquire a circulation and recognition sufficient to insure its translation into another language. We have, for instance, clear evidence that a Latin version of the Scriptures was in circulation in Western Europe toward the end of the second century. Taking into account the time necessary for the version to become current, and the time necessary for the original document to have acquired sufficient importance to lead to its translation, the Latin version of the New Testament would throw the original Gospels and Epistles back to the close of the first century.

Versions, moreover, are helps in interpretation. The Greek of the New Testament, for instance, is interpenetrated with Semitic elements. The question which is constantly before the New Testament scholar is, What meaning did certain Greek words convey to a Semitic mind? Valuable help is afforded here by the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament, which grew out of the fusion of Greek and Oriental thought in the third century before Christ.

Versions, again, furnish important aid in determining the different families of Greek texts We naturally ask on what form of the Greek text the version was based, whether Alexandrian or Byzantine, Latin or Asiatic. It may have been made from several different texts 25 was the Peshitto or Syriac Vulgate, which accepted readings from three sources.

A Syriac version has a special value. Syriac or Aramaic was the first language into which the New Testament was translated, so that early versions in that tongue have a closer affinity with the Greek text than others. The Greek was commonly written by men who thought in Aramaic, as is apparent, for instance, in the Greek of the Fourth Gospel. Aramaic was a Semitic dialect, originating in the district of Aram, which comprised all the people of Syria and Mesopotamia northward to the Taurus and eastward to the Tigris. Through contact with non-Semitic races the language became mixed and corrupt, and fell into two branches, the northeastern and southwestern; the former of which developed into Syriac, and the latter bore the name of Chaldee. After the exile Aramaic became the popular language of Palestine, and was the language ordinarily used by Christ, though he probably spoke Greek on occasion.

Christianity entered Syria very early. Paul's journey to Damascus was undertaken in order to exterminate the Christians there, and his missionary labors began at Antioch. At Edessa, in northwestern Mesopotamia, the beginnings of the Christian faith go back to the former half of the second century, and, possibly, to the latter half of the first. The legend of the correspondence between Abgarus of Edessa and Jesus Christ is familiar, and Eusebius declared that he had found in the archives of Edessa and transour Lord. About the middle of the fourth century Syrian literature entered upon its golden age. It was especially rich in translations, mostly of occlesiastical writings, though in the fifth centisy a translation of the works of Aristotle vas undertaken.

It is evident, therefore, that a Syriac transcript of the four Gospels dating from the fifth century, which is the date assigned to the Sinai manuscript, and representing, probably, a translation made in the second century, is a matter of no ordinary interest to New Testament students. In order, however, to reach any just estimate of its value it is necessary to know what other Syriac versions of the Gospels there are, and, if possible, how this one stands related to

There is, first, the Peshitto, or Peshitta, sometimes called the Syriac Vulgate. The word means "simple," and was applied to this version either because of its simple Syriac style, free from allegorical and mystical paraphrases, or because of its simple form, as distinguished from Grecized versions which were full of daggers and asterisks in order to mark different readings. The Peshitto was not known to European scholars until 1552, and the first edition appeared at Vienna in 1555. It contained all that is now known of the version, namely, the entire New Testament, except II Peter, II and III John, Jude and the Apocalypse. It is accurate, faithful and idiomatic. Dr. Schaff remarks that it is as unfettered as an original composition in Syriac, and that its genius is like that of Luther's German version.

About the beginning of this century, however, About the beginning of this century, however, or this document stands alone in its readings of the changes and high perceived that the Peshitto was not the original Syriac, but a revision of a more ancient version. This was inferred from lessness. It has been suggested that they may

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JOHN M. CROSS, A. M., Principal. the fact that it differed from early versions generally, and from other important early documentary authorities in the support which it gave to a late Greek text. It is considered probable that the revision was made under high authority, at a great ecclesiastical centre like Edessa or Nisibis or Antioch, and in the latter part of the third or in the fourth century.

This conclusion was confirmed by the discovery in 1842 of considerable fragments of another and older version. The volume containing these fragments, mixed with a mass of other matter, was found in the Syrian convent of St. Mary Delpara in the Nitrian Desert, seventy miles porth of Cairo. It was deposited in the British seum, where the leaves of the Syriac Gospels were recognized and separated by the Rev. Willam Cureton, assistant keeper of manuscripts in the museum, who edited and published them in 1858. The manuscript was of quarto size, with two columns or each page, and was written on tained the larger parts of Matthew and Luke, three verses of the sixteenth chapter of Mark and a considerable portion of John.

sides these two we have a version made by Philozenus, the Bishop of Hierapolis, in 508, and called after him the Philozenian. It is based on the Peshitto, and forces it into servile conformity with the letter of the Greek. This version was revised in \$16 by one Thomas of Heracles, and is known as the Herclean. It contains the whole

w Testament, except the Apocalypse. To these must be added another work which may assist in determining the true place of the Sinai manuscript. About 160 A. D., Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr, and a Syrian by birth. repared a combination or harmony of the four ospels, which he called "Diatessaron," or "The which was denied by the anonymous author of "Supernatural Religion," is now extant in with his having been the father of Jesus. Un-two Arabic translations, edited and published in fortunately, there is a lacuna in the manuscript

1888 by Ciasca, one of the librarians of the Vatican. Opinions are divided as to whether the original work was written in Syriac or in A few scholars, notably Haack, maintain a Greek original and a Syriac translation; but the weight of critical opinion favors a Syriac original. The Diatessaron, though based on the Gospel of Matthew, worked in nearly the whole of the Gospel of John, and the book was often used in the Syrian churches because of its more

convenient size. ssion raised by Mrs. Lewis's discovery. What is the precise value of this discovery to New Testament critcism? This question cannot yet be satisfactorly answered. There can be no doubt that the Sinai manuscript is a valuable piece of evidence, but, as one of the greatest of modern textualists has remarked, "Evidence is valuable only so far as it can be securely interpreted." It is a link, but its true value depends on other links which are yet wanting. Our factors are: 1. A very early Syriac version of the Gospels represented by the Cureton fragment. But how early? High authorities, such as Westcott and Hort, Payne Smith, Tregelles, gard it as the oldest form of the Syriac version; yet there may be an earlier. All that we are practically sure of is that it is earlier than the Peshitto. 2. That the Peshitto is a revision of an earlier version may be regarded as established. Is that earlied version the Curetonian? posed about A. D. 160, was the Diatessaron written originally in Syriac? Was it older than the Curetonian? To quote Mrs. Lewis's words: Was the Diatessaron compiled in the second century from the version contained in the Curetonian and in the Sinal codices, or did that version come into existence only in the fourth century when the use of the Diatessaron was discontinued?" 4. We have the newly discovered manuscript. All that we can say with any approach to certainty is that it is earlier than the Peshitto. Whether it is older than the Curetonian is still an open question. It does not perfectly coincide with the Curetonian. Two authorities, Nestle, of Ulm. and J. Rendel Harris, who is not given to hasty conclusions in questions of criticism, think that this is not a duplicate of the Curetonian, but the very first attempt at rendering the Gospel Into Syriac, of which both the Diatessaron and the Curetonian are revisions. The new discovery adds to the

If, as is most probable, this manuscript carries us back to the middle of the second century, it braces the conclusion, which, even before its discovery it was difficult to resist, and which was powerfully supported by the testimony of the Diatessaron, that our four Gospels were in wide circulation in Syria by the middle of the second century; that, as Harnack observes, they had already taken a place of prominence in the Church, and that no others had done so; and that, in particular, the fourth Gospel had taken a fixed place alongside of the Synoptic Gospels. In that case their composition must be assigned to a date closely approaching, if not identical, with that to which the Church has commonly referred them-the latter part of the first century. When the conditions are considered under which documents acquired recognition and currency in that age, the slow process of transcription and the consequent scarcity of copies, the imperfect and precarious means of communication between distant regions, the Oriental habit of relying upon oral tradition-fifty years is not an excessive allowance for the attainment of a circulation and influence such as should lead to translation into a foreign tongue and working

evidence that the Peshitto is a revision. It ap-

pears to furnish the practical completion of the

earlier Syriac text.

up into a combined Gospel. The text of the Sinal manuscript presents a number of variations from the standard Greek texts, but most of them are curious and interesting, rather than in portant. There are some transpositions, the principal of which is in John xviii. In the ordinary Greek text the statement that Christ was led to Annas is immediately followed by the first denial of Peter. Then comes the questioning of Jesus by the High Priest, and then the second and third denials of Peter. In the Syriac the questioning by the High Priest ows immediately upon Christ's being led to consecutive narrative in the succeeding verses. The whole section gains in clearness and vividness by this arrangement, according to which, moreover, the examination of Jesus is conducted by Caiaphas and not by Annas. In Luke xxii there is a fresh arrangement of the narrative from verse 17 to verse 21, by which it is made more compact and orderly. It is noteworthy that "our Lord" is substituted for "Jesus" in numerous passages in all the four Gospels. In Luke ii, 14, the familiar rendering "peace on earth, good will to men" appears instead of that adopted by the latest Greek texts and by the revisers of 1881. The most remarkable interpolation is at Luke xxiii, 48: "Woe unto us, what hath befallen us? Woe unto us for our sins." This occurs only in the Codex Bezae (D) of the sixth century, which is distinguished by its bold and extensive interpolations, and which is pervaded with a strong Syriac element, and which, according to Westcott and Hort, presents a truer image of the form in which the Gospels and Acts were most widely read in the third, and probably a great part of the second century, than any other

Two variations require special notice. The first is that which asserts the purely human generation of Christ. Matthew i, 16, reads: "Joseph begat Jesus, who is called Christ." In verse 25 the words "and knew her not until" are omitted. In verse 21, where the Greek reads "She shall bear a son," "to thee" is added; and in verse 25 "to him" is inserted after "brought forth a son." This document stands alone in its readings of have proceeded from a heretical transcriber or translator, and some plausibility attaches to this conjecture from the fact that heresy very early found its way into Syria. By the end of the second century the views of the Gnostic Bardesanes. of the school of Valentinus, had obtained currency, and his 150 hymns had become so popular that when Father Ephraem wrote his hymns in order to supplant them he had to use Bardesanes's tunes. Tatian was a Gnostic of the Docetic type, and good Bishop Theodoret tells how he found more than two hundred copies of the Diatessaron in his churches, which his flock were using without suspicion of the heresy which lurked in them, and how he called them all in and replaced them with copies of the four evangelists. Theodoret also declared that Tatian had omitted from the Diatessaron whatever went to show that Jesus was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. Gnosticism presented different phases, and denied both the proper humanity and the proper divinity of Jesus. A writer in one of the reviews soon after Mrs.

Lewis's discovery was announced said that we see in the manuscript "the Gospel either in process of formation as the sources are gradually combined until they reach the final orthodox form, or in the process of primitive contamination under the influence of the earliest perverting hands." But the manuscript is too substantially in accord with the present form of the Gospels to justify the former part of this alternative, and too generally orthodox to justify the latter part. As a whole it bears no evidence of being the work of a heretic. Moreover, as regards the passage in question it contradicts it-self, since it retains Matthew i, 18, "When they had not come near to one another, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." It also retains the statement that Joseph was troubled about her condition, which is quite inconsistent

from Luke i, 16 to verse 39, but the words "the angel from her" are evidently the conclusion of Luke's narrative of the visitation of the angel

The second point is the omission of the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel. It is impossible to go into the details of the hot fight which has raged round these verses. The section is wanting in the two oldest unclais, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and according to the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome in the fourth century, it was lacking in almost all the Greek manuscripts of their day. But, on the other hand, it is found in most of the unclais, in all the cursives, in most of the ancient versions, and in all the existing Greek and Syriac lectionaries so far as examined. The internal evidence looks both ways. On the one hand the large number of words and phrases not elsewhere used by Mark point to another writer. On the other hand, it seems improbable that Mark should have abruptly closed his Gospel with the words "for they were afraid." It is quite possible that something prevented Mark from concluding his Gospel, and that the twelve verses were supplied by another hand. Some confirmation of this view has been recently furnished by Mr. Conybeare's discovery, in an Armenian manuscript of the tenth century, of the words "Ariston the Presbyter's" appended to these verses. The Sinal manuscript gives little light on the question by its omission, since the section is found in the Peshitto, the Curetonian and the Jerusalem Syriac and also in the Diatessaron.

The book is handsomely printed, and contains fac simile of the end of Mark's Gospel, and a list of words and phrases in the "Textus Receptus" which are omitted in the Syriac version without a full equivalent. Mrs. Lewis's introduction gives a graphic account of the discovery. and a useful summary of the critical questions which it opens.

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Dublic Notices.

DUBLIC NOTICE.

July 2d. 1896, and approved by the Mayor July 5th, 1895, viz.:

Resolved, That Wednesday, the 7th day of August, 1896, at 2 o'clock P. M. in the afternoon, and the Chamber of the Board of Aidermen, at the City Hall, in the City of New-York, be and they hereby are designated as the time and place when and where the application of the Third Avenue Hallroad Company to the Common Council of the City of New-York for its consent and permission to the construction, maintenance and operation of the branches or extensions, as set forth in the petition of said company for such consent and permission, will be first considered, and that public notice be given by the Clerk of this Board by publishing the same daily for at least fourteen days in two daily newspapers published in the City of New-York, to be designated therefor by his Honor the Mayor, according to the provisions of Section 52 of the Appense of the petitioner.

Public Notice is hereby given that at the time and piace mentioned in the resolution the following application of the Third Avenue Railroad Company will be considered as is required by the provisions of the Railroad Law;

To the Honorable the Common Council of the City of

place mentioned in the Railroad Company will be considered as is required by the provisions of the Railroad Law:

To the Honorable the Common Council of the City of New-York:

The petition of the Third Avenue Railroad Company respectfully shows:

That your petitioner is a corporation duly organized and incorporated under the laws of the State of New-York and has constructed and now operates a line of railroad extending, among other streets, upon the Bowsey, Third avenue, One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, Manhattan street and Tenth avenue, in the City of New-York.

That your petitioner proposes to construct, maintain and operate a street surface railroad for public use in the City of New-York, with double tracks, connecting with the tracks of said company already constructed, and at branches or extensions thereof, upon and along the surface of streets, avenues and highways in the City of New-York, as follows:

From the junction of Kingsbridge road or Broadway-York, as Clows:

face of streets, avenues and highways in the City of NewYork, as follows:
From the junction of Kingsbridge road or Broadway
and West One Hundred and Sixty-second street, connecting
there by suitable curves, switches and appliances with
this company's railroad upon Amsterdam avenue; running
thence mortherly and northeasterly through and along
Kingsbridge road or Broadway to and across the proposed
new bridge over the Ship Canal; theace northerly through
and along Kingsbridge road to Broadway from the proposed new bridge over the Ship Canal, to and across the
bridge over Spyten Duyril creek at Broadway; thence
northerly from the bridge over Sputten Duyril creek at
Broadway, through and alone Broadway to the city line.
Also from the junction of West One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street and St. Nicholas avenue, connecting there by
suitable curves, switches and appliances with the company's railroad upon West One Hundred and Twenty-fifth
street; running thence acutherly on St. Nicholas avenue
to a junction of said avenue with Manhattan avenue
thence southerly and over and along Manhattan avenue
West One Hundred and Sixteenth street, with all the
necessary connections, switches, turn-outs and cross-overs,
sidings, turn-tables and suitable stands for the convenient working of said road and for the accommodation of
the company's cars which may run over the same.
Also from the junction of Kingsbridge road or Broadway
and Riverdale avenue, running thence northewsterly and
northerly through, upon and along Riverdale avenue to the
city line.
Also from the junction of Manhattan greet and Eleventh

northerly through, upon and along Riverdale avenue to the city line.

Also from the junction of Manhattan street and Eleventh avenue or Boulevard, connecting there by suitable curves, switches and appliances with this company's railroad upon Manhattan street; running thence northerly through, upon and along Eleventh avenue or Boulevard to the junction of Kingsbridge road or Broadway, at or near One Hundred and Sixty-ninth street, with all the necessary, connections, switches, turn-outs, cross-overs, idings,

tive power other than steam locomotive power, which now or hereafter may be lawfully used or employed on its route.

Your petitioner further shows that, pursuant to the laws of this State, it is necessary for it to obtain the consent of the Common Council of the City of New-York to enable it to construct, maintain and operate the railroad aforested and accordingity your petitioner applies to your Honorald, and accordingity your petitioner applies to your Honorald, and accordingity your petitioner applies to your Honorald and accordingity your petitioner applies to your Honorald and continuity of the route hereinbefore described, which lies north of One Hundrad and Twenty-fifth street and Manhattan street, is separated from the portion of said route which lies south of said streets by those portions of One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street and Manhattan street which lie between Eleventh avenue or the Boulevard and St. Nicholas avenue, upon which your petitioner already owns and operates a street surface railroad, that in case this patients is granted and a sale is made of the franchises therein described, the petitioner will deliver to the successful bidder at said sale a conveyance granting, for one dollar per annum as rental, the right and privilege of using perpetually the tracks of the Third Avenue Railroad Company upon One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street and Manhattan street, between Eleventh avenue or Boulevard and St. Nicholas avenue, for the purpose of operating its cars, and the right to operate upon such tracks by any motive which may be requisite and necessful bidder may lawfully be authorised to employ, and makes and the right to operate upon such tracks on any motive which may be requisite and necessful bidder may lawfully be authorised to employ, and which may be requisite and necessful bidder may lawfully be authorised to employ, and makes and a receive and extension with the tracks of the Third Avenue Railroad Company at the Junc ion of Manhattan arreet and Eleventh avenue or Boulevard, and at the

enth avenue or Boulevard, and at the junction of St. Nicholas avenue with One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street.

And your petitioner further stipulates and agrees as a part of this petition, and as a condition by which it shill be bound in case this petition is granted and the sale of said franchizes is accordingly made, that it will execute and deliver to the Comptroller of the City of New-York a bond in the penal sum of fifty thousand dollars, and of such form as the Corporation Counsel of the City of New-York shall approve, whereby your petitioner shall be obligated to fully perform each and every of the provisions of each and every of its foregoing and following offers, agreements and stipulations.

And your petitioner further stipulates and agrees as part of this petition, and as a condition by which it shall be bound in case the sare is granted, that it will ble upon the public sale of said franchizes, and in addition to the three per cent. of its gross receipts required by statute to be annually paid for the first five years after the construction and operation of said extension, and its addition to the five per cent. in like manner required to be paid after said five years, not less than two per cent. of its gross receipts per annum.

And your petitioner further stipulates, in case it shall be the successful bidder at said sale and acquire the right to build said extension, to pay into the City Treasury the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand delians is

aigns.

Dated New-York, July 1, 1896.

Dated New-York, July 1, 1896.

THE THIRD AVENUE RAILROAD COMPANT, by Albert J. Elias, President.

All persons interested in the foregoing application are hereby notified to be present at the time and place members of the present at the time at the present at the present at the time at the time at the time at the present at the timplement at the time at the time at the time at the time at the t

DEPARTMENT OF TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS.

COMMISSIONERS OFFICE.

New-York, July 1st, 1868.

DUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given by the Commissioners of Taxes and Assessments that the assessment rolls of real and personal setate in said city, for the year 1850, have been finally completed, and bare been delivered to the Board of Aldermen of said city, and that such assessment rolls will remain open to public inspection, in the office of the Clerk of said Beard of Aldermen, for a period of fifteen days from the date of this notice.

EDWARD P. BARKER.
THEODORE SUTRO,
JAMES L. WELLS.
sioners of Taxes and Assessments

Proposals.

PROPOSAL for furnishing Bluestone Traper and Covers, Sewer Pipe, Invert Block at Invert Bricks. Office of the Commissioners, D. C., Was ington, D. C., July 12, 1805. Sealed Proposals will be relived at this office until 12 o'clock M., Monday, July 1805. for furnishing Bluestone Trap Frames and coment and terra cotta sewer pipe, vitrified and stone; owner to blocks and vitrified invert bricks to Deirste of Clumbia. Blank forms of proposal and seasifications in he obtained at this office. J. W. Ross, George Transfer, Chas. F. Fowell, Commissioners, D. C.